



## WOUNDED WARRIOR

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#### Send your comments, feedback

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## Air Force Cross recipient has 3 minutes to change the world

by Capt. Kristen D. Duncan  
Air Force Special Operations Command  
Public Affairs

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. -- As the only qualified joint terminal attack controller in an operation Oct. 5, 2009, an Air Force Special Operations Command combat controller knew the ground situation would be dire if he died. As an armor-piercing round entered his left shoulder and wreaked havoc throughout his chest, he said his focus wasn't on his young family in North Carolina. It was on his team.

"I've seen those types of injuries before and time isn't your friend," said the Air Force Cross recipient Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr. "I thought -- I have three minutes before I'm going to die. I've got to do something big. Based on that time frame, I'm going to change the world in three minutes."

The team of 30 U.S. Army Special Forces and Afghan National Army commandos was surrounded in a "Taliban-sympathetic village" in the Herat province of Afghanistan.



Air Force Special Operations Command combat controller Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez was awarded the Air Force Cross as announced by Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. Norton Schwartz Sept. 20, 2011. (U.S. Air Force courtesy photo)

According to officials' reports, enemy fighters were positioned on rooftops just 10-feet from the team's position inside a neighboring

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# Military couples:

## Healthy relationship prevents domestic violence

By Karen Parrish  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Helping military couples and families build healthy relationships can help to prevent domestic violence, a Defense Department official said Sept. 28.

Kathy Robertson, program manager for DOD's Family Advocacy Program, said spouses with strong trust and good communication skills can address relationship problems before they escalate.

When violence does occur, Robertson said, the department offers a range of support resources for victims, beginning with reporting options.

Domestic violence victims can choose either restricted or unrestricted reporting options, and in both cases can receive medical help and counseling support, she said.

Unrestricted reporting involves notifying the chain of command, and appropriate first-responder law enforcement agencies. Restricted, or confidential reporting, which a victim can do by contacting a Family Advocacy Program victim advocate, counselor, health care provider or chaplain, allows a victim to receive medical,

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*With a significant other, you know how to push each other's buttons and pull those triggers.*

**Kathy Robertson**  
**DOD Family Advocacy Program manager**

counseling and advocacy help while taking time to decide whether to proceed with an unrestricted report, Robertson said.

Restricted reporting is not possible in cases involving child abuse, or when a victim advocate judges the person reporting is in imminent danger, she noted.

The restricted reporting option has been in place since 2006, and is intended to offer domestic violence victims a chance to seek help despite fears they might feel based on their situation, Robertson said.

“A lot of times, victims don't want to come forward -- they're afraid to come forward,” she



Good communication can help couples work through the challenges. (Courtesy photo)

added.

Often in such cases, Robertson said, abuse has escalated over time, and victims -- especially military spouses -- may fear loss of finances, housing and family security. Restricted reporting offers them a safe avenue to help, she added.

Family advocacy staff members can help victims identify their options and make an informed decision about what to do next, she said.

“There are many families [we help] with intervention and treatment; they are able to

reconcile, work things out and stay together,” she said. “Every case is individual.”

The department offers a range of on- and off-post counseling options, classes, and individual and

group therapy, Robertson noted, and Family Advocacy representatives can help in guiding people to appropriate help.

“Military life is very challenging; it's lots of long hours [and] deployments,” she said, adding that good communication can help couples work through the challenges.

“With a significant other, you know how to push each other's buttons and pull those triggers,” she said. “We help them recognize those signs and get help before an incident happens -- or after an incident happens, help them ... [identify] those triggers ... and improve their communication and their trust.”

## Child care priority available for some people

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas – Wounded warriors and the dependents of combat-fallen warriors now have priority placement privileges on child care waiting lists for Air Force child care programs.

This includes child development centers, family child care homes and school-age programs.

In order to receive priority placement, Airmen must be enrolled in the Air Force Wounded Warrior Program. They will have to furnish a copy of orders reflecting their disability, illness or injury was received during combat duty in order to have their child's name

placed at the top of the waiting list.

"This new policy will really help our wounded warrior families who often struggle with their child care needs and their hectic schedules," said Ed Heinbaugh, an AFW2 care manager. "It is just one more tool that will help them with their recovery and regaining a sense of normalcy in their lives."

Air Force wounded warriors who return to active duty shall maintain their place on the waiting list or in the program provided their spouse is in a full-time employment or student status. Wounded warriors who are medically retired will be

authorized to use Air Force child care programs until their dependent child reaches age 12 if their spouse is in a full-time employment or student status. Weekly fees will be based on total family income unless a hardship waiver is granted by the installation's mission support group commander.

Dependents of combat-related fallen warriors can use Air Force child care programs until age 12 provided the surviving spouse is in a full-time student or employment status. The base casualty assistance representative can help with eligibility verification. Fees will

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## Pay dates changing for all military retirees

CLEVELAND -- Paydays for military retirees and those who receive portions of retired pay are changing for September and December, as the Defense Finance and Accounting Service changes its pay schedule to comply with the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act.

The 2011 NDAA requires military retiree pay to be processed on the first day of the month. When that day falls on a weekend or national holiday, the pay date is moved to the previous business day.

This year payments normally scheduled for Oct. 3 will be issued on Sept. 30, and payments normally scheduled for Jan. 3, 2012, will be issued on Dec. 30. For calendar 2011, this means military retirees will receive 13 rather than the normal 12 payments.

The 13th payday on Dec. 30 falls within the 2011 tax year which could affect the tax liability of some retirees and those who receive portions of their retired pay. Customers should speak with a tax adviser, the Internal Revenue Service or their state tax authority to determine if their tax withholding will satisfy federal and state income taxes when they file returns next year. DFAS officials cannot provide tax advice.

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## Special compensation available to offset AFW2 caregiver support

The Office of Wounded Warrior Care and Transition Policy recently issued a new policy to help catastrophically wounded, ill and injured Service members.

A new special compensation for assistance with activities of daily living was formalized into policy in September, and now the military services' wounded warrior programs are currently implementing the policy and notifying potentially eligible service members about the application process.

This special monthly compensation is for service members who incur a permanent catastrophic injury or illness. The special compensation for caregiver support helps offset the loss of income by a primary caregiver who provides non-medical care, support, and assistance for the service member.

The special compensation is paid to a service member until he or she is separated from the service or until he or she no longer require assistance with activities of daily living. The compensation is term limited.

Wounded warriors should contact the Air Force survivor assistance hotline at 877-872-3435 for the application form and guidance.



## Services and Resources

[Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities](#) includes a one-month online portion followed by a 10-day intensive boot camp for business startups at one of the participating universities. All expenses are paid by the program. Once completed, individuals are mentored for one year.

Troubled troops, veterans and family members have a round-the-clock, free resource for locating the help they need to deal with psychological health problems and traumatic brain injury. [The 24/7 Outreach Center](#) is part of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, or DCoE. The center is always staffed with trained, professional health-resource consultants. Call 866-966-1020.



The [National Association of American Veterans](#) is committed to assisting eligible service members, veterans, and their families experiencing financial hardship. A one-time grant up to \$1,500 (based on availability of funding) may be provided to help families in the areas of: mortgage assistance, rent, home repair/maintenance, vehicle repair/maintenance, medical expenses, and transportation expenses. Financial assistance can be obtained for other critical needs on a case-by-case basis.

The [GI Rights Hotline](#) (877-447-4487) uses trained civilian counselors to provide counseling and information on military discharges, AWOL and UA, and GI Rights. It includes both a national program and local hotline branches around the country.

## Initiative provides cycling opportunities

Soldier Ride is a Wounded Warrior Project initiative that provides cross-country adaptive cycling opportunities to help wounded warriors restore their physical and emotional well-being.

It is a unique adaptive cycling experience that honors military men and women as they courageously battle the physical and psychological damages of war. Through the exhilaration of cycling, warriors embrace possibilities for the future in a supportive environment with fellow injured veterans.

While Soldier Ride has inspired spectators for years, the experience is now open to everyone, allowing the public the opportunity to ride alongside the warriors as they convey a positive message of recovery.

Wounded Warrior Project provides equipment and support to participating injured service members at no cost to the warrior. Soldier Ride raises funds for Wounded Warrior Project programs and initiatives.

For more information, visit [solderride.org](http://solderride.org).



## Upcoming events

Wounded Warrior Project offers [Project Odyssey](#). With its name derived from Homer's epic poem about overcoming adversity and finding the way home, Project Odyssey helps warriors heal their spirits and helps to overcome combat stress through outdoor, rehabilitative retreats that encourage a connection with nature, peers, and others. The retreats focus on the positive aspects of military service, teamwork, and overcoming difficult obstacles. Warriors participate in outdoor, recreational activities geared at building self-esteem and overcoming fears including separation from family, interaction with others, and trust issues. Activities may include horseback riding, canoeing, whitewater rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, rappelling, a high ropes course, fishing, skeet shooting, sled hockey, and skiing at retreats held in various locations. Click [here](#) to learn more about upcoming events in late August and September.

The [2011 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival](#) takes place in Fayetteville, Ark., Oct. 17 to 23. The key purpose of the art competition and festival is to recognize veterans for their creative accomplishments and to educate and demonstrate to communities throughout the country the therapeutic benefits of the arts. The 2011 phase of the local competition has ended; however, for information about entering the 2012 competition, contact the recreation/creative arts therapy staff at the Veterans Affairs facility in which you are enrolled. The 2012 event is scheduled for Oct. 8 to 14 in Boston. If you need assistance in identifying a VA staff person from your facility, contact Amy Kimbler at 320-255-6486; or Elizabeth Mackey, national director, at 320-255-6351.



The [National Sports Center for the Disabled](#) offers a ski and snowboard program in Denver for individuals of any age who have served in the U.S. military and now have a disability and want to learn to ski or snowboard, or improve existing skills. Space is limited, so please make reservations early. Session I is set for: Jan. 8, 22, 29, and Feb 5 and 12. Session II is set for Feb. 26, and March 4, 11, 18 and 25. Rates are: \$205 per person for the five-week alpine ski or snowboard session; \$164 per person for the five-week Nordic ski and snowboard lesson, or partial-day cross-country ski and snowshoe lesson, lift ticket, equipment and transportation. Also in Denver, join forces with military men and women with disabilities who have served the nation. A two-day event is facilitated by a staff that includes U.S. military veterans. Both women and men are welcome. Evening activities are also planned. Session 1 takes place 1 p.m. Jan 31 through noon Feb 1. Transportation to and from Denver International Airport or metro-area sites, activity fees, instruction and equipment, lodging and meals are included for free. Call 970-726-1540 for more information. Registration deadline is Jan 10.

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## Do you need to update your contact information?

**NOTE - Updates should be provided to: AFW2 Program Office, AFPC Disabilities Branch, DEERS, DFAS, and the VA.**

AFW2 Program Office – Call **800-581-9437** or via email: [wounded.warrior@us.af.mil](mailto:wounded.warrior@us.af.mil)

AFPC Disabilities Branch for people on the Temporary Disability Retired List – Email [disability@us.af.mil](mailto:disability@us.af.mil)

DEERS – Updating info in DEERS is accomplished in one of three ways:  
Call **800-538-9552**

Visit a military base ID card issuance facility

Visit the website at: <https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/appj/address/indexAction.do>

DFAS – Online at “myPay” website: <https://mypay.dfas.mil>

VA – Call **800-827-1000** or visit their website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for the nearest VA office

